

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EB-11

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R 121006 Z MAR 73

FM AMCONSUL LAHORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KABUL

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, PK

SUBJECT: BUMPER WHEAT CROP FORECAST FOR PUNJAB

1. INDICATIONS AS OF MID- MARCH POINT TO BUMPER WHEAT CROP IN PUNJAB THIS YEAR. ON MARCH 3, DR. SANAULLAH, DIRECTOR OF PUNJAB AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT LYALLPUR, TOLD PRESS HE EXPECTED WHEAT TARGET OF 5,500,000 TONS TO BE EXCEEDED BY 10 TO 15 PERCENT BECAUSE OF TIMELY RAINS DURING PLANTING SEASON AS WELL AS DURING LLATER GROWING PERIOD. FURTHER RAINFALL DURING FIRST TWELVE DAYS OF MARCH HAVE IMPROVED WHEAT HARVEST OUTLOOK SINCE DR. SANAULLAH' S STATEMENT.

2. COMBINATION OF NUMBER OF FACTORS ALL POINT TO LARGE CROP BUT AVAILABILITY OF WATER IS KEY TO HARVEST. WHILE THERE ARE ISOLATED AREAS OF PUNJAB WHICH HAVE RECEIVED VERY LITTLE RAIN, MOST OF ESTIMATED 10,621,000 ACRES PLANTED IN WHEAT HAVE RECEIVED MORE THAN ADEQUATE RAINFALL, SO THAT CROP FROM AREAS NOT IRRIGATED SHOULD BE VERY GOOD. IRRIGATED AREAS HAVE HAD MUCH BETTER WATER SUPPLY THAN LAST TWO YEARS. MANGLA RESERVOIR HAS HAD ADEQUATE WATER FOR BOTH IRRIGATION AND GENERATION  
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OF ELECTRICITY, SO THAT THOSE FARMERS DEPENDING ON ELECTRICALLY OPERATED TUBE WELLS HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED OUTAGES AS THEY DID IN PAST TWO YEARS. UNLIKE LAST YEAR, THERE HAS BEEN NO SHORTAGE OF FUEL FOR DIESEL TUBE WELLS. ALL FACTORS CONSIDERED, HARVEST SHOULD APPROACH 6,000,000 TONS, UP CONSIDERABLY FROM RECORD 5.5 MILLION IN 1969-70.

3. TOP QUALITY ATTA ( FLOUR) NOW SELLING ON OPEN MARKET FOR ABOUT 22 RUPEES PER MAUND OF 82 POUNDS, WHICH TWO TO THREE RUPEES LESS THAN LAST YEAR AT SAME TIME. RETAIL TRADERS TELL US LOW PRICE CAUSED BY DUMPING OF STOCKS BY LARGE LAND OWNERS IN ANTICIPATION OF LARGE CROP AND DECLINE IN ILLEGAL GRAIN MOVEMENTS TO AFGHANISTAN SINCE CHANGE IN FRONTIER PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, WHICH TAKING LESS RELAXED ATTITUDE TOWARDS SMUGGLING.

4. COMMENT: PUNJAB FOOD MINISTER KARDAR TOLD CG RECENTLY IMPACT OF GOOD CROP WOULD BE LESSENED BY SMUGGLING UNLESS ARTIFICIALLY LOW PRICE OF WHEAT RAISED TO REALISTIC LEVEL. GOP ANNOUNCED INCREASE IN BASE PROCUREMENT PRICE FROM 17 TO 20 RUPEES PER MAUND LATE IN 1972, BUT THIS STILL LOWER THAN PRICE IN AFGHANISTAN OR INDIA, SO ILLEGAL WHEAT DRAIN LIKELY TO CONTINUE. BETTER PRICE PLUS EXCELLENT CROP, HOWEVER, WILL INCREASE PURCHASING POWER OF FARMERS, KEEP THEM HAPPY, AND IF 1969- 70 PATTERN REPEATED, LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN BANK DEPOSITS.  
DECONTROL ON RECEIPT.  
KING

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